

Do our traders lack honesty?



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Trade is the 'spinal cord' of a country's economy and the traders are its protectors. At a time our traders were among the most trusted nationals, who sacrificed all their earnings and belongings, when the country needed it. Those days have gone in the pages of history now. The situation is changed and the national feelings in the trading community have gradually diminished. Honesty, the essence of the trade has lost its value and it is no more the 'best policy' in the trade. The majority of traders feel that they could not survive if they try to be honest. They have invented the technique of more earnings with less investments and spurious products. They try to evade the legal taxation and the loopholes of our taxation policy encourages them to adopt unfair means for their monetary gains, even at the cost of their national duties. It has become a common practice among the traders to have less transactions in 'black and white' in order to evade taxation. Now a days, there are professionals who teach them how to evade taxation and protect black money. The transactions of crores of rupees go without valid documents and without hitch. Doing so the traders do not only hamper the interest and fairness of their co-traders, but further encourage evasion of taxes upto the last point of transaction. This practice leads to the accumulation of black money and results in crisis of white money circulation besides the sharp cut in the margin of profits of the small traders, who try to remain fair in their dealings. The sincere traders are compelled to adopt unfair means in the trade due to these practices and pressures.

Emergence of corrupt politicians in large scale is equally responsible for such malpractices. Hundreds of political parties need money to run their official business and traders are their easy targets. Since the small traders have to maintain sweet relations with every section of the society, they are bound to oblige such politicians too. In lieu of their services, they are allowed to adopt malpractices as compensation. The consumers complain about the quality of products and high prices they pay for those products. They do not mind to pay high prices, provided they get the quality products. It is a fact that our industries are competent of producing the quality products. But because of the middlemen's interest the consumers either get the sub standard goods which are rejected and sold at the cheapest rate by the manufacturers. It is easy for the middlemen to make the things convenient to their own interest. They either change the labels and signs of the sub-standard goods for the standard one or they mix up sub standard products in it. This practice also creates a lot of confusion in the minds of the actual users, who become the victim of their faith on such traders. Imagine, the reaction of the customer's mind when he finds that a particular item is sold at a cheaper rate than its declared Minimum Retail Price, which is meant to benefit the manufacturers and the big business houses. On many occasions cement, polyester, fabrics, utensils, cosmetics, vegetable oils etc; had appeared in the market at very cheap rates and vanished in due course. Such items never had a regular market but they disturbed badly the market activities and their impurity always derived them out. Of course, a section of traders minted huge money by such transactions..

Adulteration has become a common practice in the trade due to heavy competition, taxation and lack of honesty. Some of the big business houses who were very conscious for their quality and reputation are now involved in such malpractices. This gradually compels the small traders to follow them for their own survival. During the eighties the cases of beef tallow mixing in vegetable oil products by some big industries created sensation throughout the country. The entire humanity had developed a sense of hatred against such people, who for their monetary gains ignored all the ethics and norms of the business for which the trading community had to suffer. There had been the instances of mixing human flesh in meat. Mixing of kerosene oil in petrol and stone in rice had been always a common affair Even in the export trade where the goodwill of the nation was involved the country had to face the challenges, when our exporters did not behave well and shattered the balance of payment position on many occasions, when the Indian goods were rejected in the markets abroad. Had our traders as well as politicians been sincere to their duties the critical economic conditions could not have arisen in the past There was no reason of injustice and disparity between the 'haves 'and 'have-nots 'in the country. To build up the character of the nation the moral of the traders must be high. Unless they are sincere to their people and nation, they cannot exist in the long run. The slogan of Honesty is the best policy is an universal truth and has to exist for ever.

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